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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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To Mr. J. D. Farrell, these simple words are dedicated as a token of my respect and affection; as a slight evidence of my ever increasing gratitude for his friendship and generosity towards me when the sky was clouded and the hope of life seemed very small.

Clark Prescott Bissett

LINCOLN

Stripped to the soul of every vain conceit,
I stand before the record of his deeds.
O mighty man, so humble and so sweet,
O heart, so quick to throb for human needs.

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE blood of a man is the blood of his ancestors for generations, perhaps for æons. How far back into the dim past must we grope to find the seed blood of such a man as Abraham Lincoln?

Through what numberless selections, receiving and denying, was that process carried on? How many violations of nature's law by rebellious atoms, brought destruction to the unfit, and cleared the way for the harmonizing of the fit through these myriads upon myriads of life channels, until at last the emancipator was born? These are the thoughts which grip and hold when the character and works of America's greatest soul genius is considered. There is no answer. Deity, Who knows all laws and the working of them, is alone cognizant of such things. Yet a little knowledge of the course of the stars in their orbits compels the recognition of law in all creation, all utterance. Chance is pushed aside immediately the

realm of reason is entered. Nothing is by chance. If a grain of sand had its conception, before the mists of which the earth is made had cooled, is a Lincoln to come into being by a cast of mortal dice? Was this harmonious representative of all the best in physical, mental, moral and soul endowment of less moment to the Universal Creator than a sparrow, which does not fall to the ground without His notice? Is the genius of a Wagner, who brought together such sublime harmonies, accidental? And did the man who struck the cords of universal rights, universal justice, and universal democracy, have less care from the Father of all life, than His simpler creations?

Abraham Lincoln is the name of a combination of Nature's forces in such harmonious union, that the more they were beaten upon, the more they proved their divine metal, the brighter the effulgence they emitted. Pore over all the records of his life, which is one of the simplest and most open that this earth has ever seen, and there is no point of it that shows the least flaw when measured by the Rule of Truth.

An intellectual giant may be developed by culture from an inferior brain and body. A great general, like Napoleon, may be in a sense the product of his environment. A great inventor like Edison may be forced to his highest point by application and the study of science applied to natural law. A great philosopher like Socrates may be developed through the channels of observation and the warmth of his heart. A great financier like Gould or Morgan may be educated to supremacy in the school of business, big and little. But a wise lawgiver, like Solomon or Lincoln, is not born of the flesh but of the spirit. Justice, the sense of it even, cannot be put into a man's brain and heart by any process of education, or environment, or experience.

The one attribute of Abraham Lincoln that ruled his being like a central sun was Justice. All other attributes circled around it and were governed by it. You may call it Justice or you may call it love. It matters not, for there is no difference in the quality or quantity of these two words. An earthly being whose motive power is justice will do exactly the same things

under the same circumstances as one whose motive power is love. This statement is capable of proof, from comparison of the two or three figures in the records of the world who have best represented these chief attributes of Deity.

Lincoln the boy was as just as Lincoln the man. He required no precedent on which to found his reasoning. He was as ready as Solomon to give his decision on any vital point and his verdicts were as simple and uncontrovertible. Born and reared on the borderland between states that were divided on a question which had reached no decisive solution, through all the ages, outside of religious philosophy, he never even debated it in his own mind. A union of states meant the union of the individual, and neither was open to secession.

An inharmonious intellect was as much at war with itself, in his high temple of thought, as an inharmonious state, or country, or kingdom. He saw in the Union under the Declaration of Independence, the Union of the individual—the harmonious man, capable of self-government, subject to no man's dictation, as

far as the life, and the freedom to live that life, in the world of justice could be carried: such a thing as human ownership of another human being could not be, in the thought of the child or the man Lincoln. He acknowledged no allegiance to any power on earth. His Creator was his sole and only King. The union of the States was a symbol to him of his union with God.

Study him as you may, by his own words, by the records made of him through his intimates, and by his acts, and you will find no other Lincoln than this. If the times in which he lived brought to light this attribute of justice in all its pure radiance, that does not argue that the times were the cause of it. Not at all. The Union had hundreds of men of far greater educational virtues, far superior culture, far broader experience, and of no less human sympathies—Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, Stephen A. Douglas, his great rival; Salmon P. Chase, Edwin A. Stanton, and the great prime minister, William H. Seward; but none of these had lighted in his soul the lamp of justice. Not one of

them could bring himself to love his personal enemy: much less the enemies of his theory of government. Lincoln proved himself to be compounded of Love and Justice, so absolutely so, that he never judged any man. He may have punished because he himself obeyed the law of justice, but he did not cease to love.

We talk of democracy, but the world has known but few democrats—perhaps not more than two. To see every human being as an equal before the law of justice is impossible to any merely educated intelligence.

The eyes that look upon men, as the rain falls, alike on the just and on the unjust, are not subject to the light of libraries. They shine with the light of heaven. No mortal reason can bring a man to this sublime philosophy. Such a state of mind is foolishness to culture. Even religious enthusiasm falls far short of this God-like contemplation of the things of this world. But Abraham Lincoln so saw, so felt, so understood. Black or white, bond or free, friend or enemy, he saw them all in love —"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," speaks out boldly in his every

utterance, beams out benignly from his every act.

The books that have been written in an endeavor to express their authors' reflection of this man Lincoln, now make a large library. But not one of them, written as they are out of the best heart's love, compares with the man Lincoln, or begins to shine with his illimitable personality. Records of him are material. He himself was a living flame, burning grandly, but steadily, making plain the smallest fibre of any fact to which its rays were directed. Such a man is beyond description. The noblest mind among men can do no more than to appreciate him to its greatest bent, and then it finds itself only in the borderland of his clear thought. What matter if his boots were unblacked, or his coat ill-fitting. There was not a stain upon his heart, nor a wrinkle in his soul. His simplest sentence is a thunderbolt: his fiercest anathema a blessing. He walks the land today, a spirit of colossal proportions by which men, measured by their words and acts, are the merest pigmies.

Lincoln's greatest general never lost a battle, but his generalship lasted only four years, and was confined to the government and science of war. Lincoln's work endured from the cradle on into eternity, and his battles were in the highest clouds of human reason, and he too never lost a battle. His foot never took a backward step. His judgment never failed. Neither did his love pale nor his justice repent.

Look upon that homely pictured face hanging upon your study wall. Do you not feel a new warm glow in your heart? Do not the mixed reasons in your brain fall into sweet concord? Does not humanity show itself in gentler aspects? Do not personal ambitions fade? Do not animosities die away? And is there not somehow born in your whole being a consciousness of harmony and sweet security for the eventual salvation of the peoples of the earth? Such is the immortal influence of Abraham Lincoln. No other man who ever trod the earth stands as close to the heart of the world as Abraham Lincoln, save He who voiced for all mankind the teaching, that was nearest to being exemplified among mortals,

by this cabin-born son of American pioneers, and whose going out from this life wrought not only a union of the States, but, for that hour of mourning at least, the Union of all the peoples of the earth.

On February 12th, 1809, a child was born in whose veins flowed the pure blood of protest against every form of despotism and oppression. That child was Abraham Lincoln. The most exhaustive research, bearing upon his lineage, fails to reveal among his ancestors any one foreign to the Anglo-Saxon race. In him met and commingled the sturdy Puritan Roundhead of Massachusetts and the chivalric cavalier of old Virginia. Back of that, the line leads to the two divisions of England's best blood, facing each other in the historic War of the Roses. Religious coercion on the one hand, and property despotism on the other, had forced the Puritans out of England to the inhospitable shores of Massachusetts; the unfortunate and pleasure-loving debtor children of the cavaliers to the softer climate of the Chesapeake. In this new environment, these different strains of Briton's conquerors

were again pressed together for self-preservation; with the Mother Country hounding them from the sea, and hordes of savages threatening them by land, the American Colonist wrested freedom from the one, and a princely domain from the other. The Roundheads, moving westward from Massachusetts into Pennsylvania, and thence southward into Virginia, and the cavaliers journeying from the Chesapeake into Kentucky and Tennessee, became one again, after a hundred years of separation, in a race of hardy pioneers; in a new country, which was the immediate refuge of the persecuted and oppressed of all western Europe, wherein English, Dutch, Spanish, French and Portuguese exiles found foothold and clung with the last despairing hope of ultimate freedom. Abraham Lincoln's forefathers, paternal and maternal, seem never to have mated outside their tribe. By the process of elimination, the great Emancipator stands out as the purest type of an American, whether he be considered from a standpoint of ancestry or achievement. How many generations of Protestant dissenters, of Puritan idealism, of

final pilgrimage into the savage wilderness, of cavalier glory, passionate love of life, and ultimate poverty and woe, were woven and knitted into the strange child-life that Nancy Hanks brought into the world, in the floorless cabin, on the Kentucky frontier! What memories of good fighting on sea and land, of Norsemen with flowing hair shining in the sun, bearing down upon swarthy Franks who met them in the death grapple for territorial supremacy! What subconscious dreams of kingly courts, of brave jousts for love or fame, of holy Crusades, of gradual loss of religious and political freedom, of sturdy rebellion, of bloody internecine war, of sacrifice and persecution, with the primal principle of self-government, burning forever in the heart!

When the original seed from which Abraham Lincoln sprung is considered, the splendid manhood and womanhood that culminated in his being, is not so much a matter of wonder: it seems more like the positive demonstration of a scientific fact.

It is, or seems to be, a provision of nature, that her very greatest children should have the

very humblest birth and childhood. The Master of all men was born in a stable and reared amidst poverty and toil. The master of all literature, Shakespeare, was of humble birth, and his early years were passed in obscurity and privation. Lincoln, the master of all Republican rulers, was born to sorrow, privation, toil, and the most meager intellectual advantages. His childhood and youth were passed in a region so isolated, and among a people so scattered and poverty stricken, that the record of his life, as he himself declared, can be compressed into a single line of Gray's Elegy,

"The short and simple annals of the poor."

That a man who has stamped his genius, his personality, his unexampled mind and character, in large letters upon the golden pages of the world's most sublime and colossal events, and, at the same time, flooded his surroundings with a halo of purity, gentleness and immeasurable love, will always be a matter of astonishment and wonder. To penetrate even a little way into his great heart, and see even dimly with his unclouded vision, the under-

lying principle of human life, is to be born again. Nothing short of Divine inspiration can give the measure of his wisdom and universal love.

If we are to attribute his genius to the evolution of blood and birth, we must see in one comprehensive view, the Greek, the Roman, the Gaul, the ancient Hebrew, and the Jew of the first century of the Christian era, the Norman, the Saxon, the Celt, and the swiftly sweeping pageantry of western Europe, with all these pouring its best heart's blood into the little Island of Britain, where it is purified in the seething melting pot of struggle for human liberty, to flow out again anew into the settlement of the American Colonies. Here we find it crystallizing in the perfect expression of all human rights, human hopes and human ideals, in the one greatest world's sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Further than this, the mind of man cannot go;

higher it cannot reach; deeper it cannot penetrate; more just or merciful it cannot be.

Here is reached the loftiest conception of life, among a noble and perfected people. That such a state of existence has never been approached upon this earth, does not weaken in the least the force and substance of this highest truth. As the human heart conceived it and gave it form and utterance, so the human heart everywhere and under all circumstances, recognizes the glorious possibility of its final achievement, and the humblest and most ignorant conceive somewhat of the blessed state of life in such a society; and it was the application of this perfect principle of government to all the affairs of life, that made Abraham Lincoln the foremost figure in his day and which is lifting him higher and higher in the scale of human greatness, as the years go by.

For every child born into the world, there is a stir in the universe. It cannot be otherwise, if men are souls, and the children of God. Human life attains dignity, as we realize this stupendous fact. Each individual

coming and going in the earth-world must have a meaning, must be a definite and authenticated note in the composition of life: otherwise, there can be no meaning in the statement on which the government of America is founded. Unless men are born with equal privileges to struggle, and strive, and rise to the heights of their nature, there is nothing either just or merciful in the scheme of things.

In the drama of today, characters are cast for each part. The story of all human endeavor, once it has passed into history, shows each incident, each act, to have been well considered, each event to have its correct place in the unfoldment of history, whether it be that of a man or a nation. Each epoch has its central figure, and over against this mighty genius is set a number of contrasting figures, ambitious either to rise with the mighty one, or to overthrow him and triumph above his ashes.

Such a world-soul was Abraham Lincoln. Into the New-Old Confederation of States, he came to weld them into a political monism, a union indivisable; a government in which each and every individual, born American, or

achieving that relationship through acquired legal citizenship, has equal power in the conduct of the government, with every other individual. The advent of this kindly man upon the arena of American politics, when the question arose as to what kind of a government the United States had, was providential. Under his master hand the Union was firmly established, the whipping post forever abolished, and four millions of human beings set free.

Centuries had been preparing for such a man. The old Hebrew prophets lived and uttered their unequaled wisdom, that it might leaven the thought and culture of the ages. The lowly Nazarene declared the truth of man's divinity, that the light of liberty might never go out of the world. Into western Europe poured the best blood of all the ancient peoples, and finally in the Island of Britain came the day when the printed Bible was on the table of every family, and the spirit of it became the very life blood of the Anglo-Saxon race. Then when, because of this very book, bitter persecution drove honest men and women to brave the hardships and dangers of

the new world, this same book became the chief corner stone in the government of the colonies.

As is so finely said by the learned Doctor Levy: "The advent of men of genius is an inexplicable event. They are the unanticipated lightning flashes in a wintry sky. They illuminate the horizon like an unexpected Aurora Borealis. They break chains. They loosen fetters. They rend shackles. They depose policy and enthrone principle. They pierce the demons of injustice with the glittering sword of right. They are as dew in the heat of conflict, and water to the soul that thirsts. In a word, they are the incarnation of the Spirit of God. Like the breaking of the dawn they come, the bringers of good tidings. They are the heroes of a new era. * * * They sow spiritual seed. They lead many unto righteousness. The cause of God prospers in their hands. * * * Upon their shoulders is placed the task of bearing the burdens of human suffering. Upon their tragic faces are burned the rugged lines of care. Gaunt and unlovely in appearance, awkward

and often unpolished in speech, unwilling to bend the knee to the Baal of social convention, they are hated and despised of their age. They are the men who hear the voice of God speaking from the flaming heights, aye, from the Sinai of the human heart. They are the men who see God in the wilderness; they speak to Him face to face. They follow Him. They cannot turn back. A long-ranged view of humanity is granted them. They cannot be untrue to the heavenly vision. Right and justice, truth and goodness are the accents they hear with the spiritual organ of an inspired imagination. They cannot if they would, be faithless to the eternal music of the spheres. Grim and grave they are, set of jaw and firm of purpose. They can die, but they cannot and will not lie. When in the silent watches of the night others sleep, they hold communion with the spirit of the universe. When others are occupied building fortunes up to the heavens, only to hide heaven from the view, they are exploring the elemental truths of human existence and pledging their all in defense of them.

"When these men of moral genius have seen from afar the Land of Promise; when God has vouchsafed to them a vision of the City Beautiful; when there flashes upon their inner consciousness a picture of a New Jerusalem; when they dream of the City whose name is righteousness, whose walls are holiness, whose ruler is equity, and whose defense is love; they cannot eat, they cannot sleep, they cannot drink, until they have shared with others that which God has vouchsafed to them. Like lofty mountain peaks, they stand alone. They desire solitude for a time. They speak with God and bring unbreakable tables of right and truth to their fellow men. These men are the salt of the earth. They are the saviours of mankind. Among every race such men are to be found. Wherever God's sun illuminates the earth, there at some time or another, such men have arisen to witness to the light, to be spokesmen for the causes dear to the Heart of God."

So the genealogy of the great Emancipator should begin with Socrates and touch upon every mountain peak of human love and uni-

versal brotherhood through all the ages. It is not over-stepping the bonds of conscientiousness, to feel that Abraham Lincoln was the blood-brother of those few universal seers and saviours, who stand in the white light of supreme and unfaltering love upon the Golgothas of glorious martyrdom.

All human records are but broken fragments of man's progress onward from slime and ooze, from cave and cabin, to the present hour, when thought is flashed around the world almost before the lips that utter it rest after the effort. Those who have been most painstaking to keep complete from root to topmost bough the family tree, must generally be satisfied with the effort itself. The world seldom has cause to search such records for the genealogy of a pronounced character. Nature seems to delight in playing tricks with pride in personality. Perhaps the All-Father would teach His children, in this way, their utter dependence upon Him, and grind it into human consciousness that man has but one Father, even God.

Abraham Lincoln is so selected and distinguished. His progenitors were a rugged and

honest race, as the book of his genealogy proves; this plain, simple man of the people might have traced his ancestry back to the best blood of England. The table of his genealogy shows this surprising fact, that the Lincoln stock, the branch at least which produced Abraham Lincoln, by some indefinable law, which we must ascribe to Divine Providence (for it is too clear and direct to be the result of chance), kept itself pure to its ancestral stock. Even the same family names recur again and again, generation after generation, Biblical names for the most part, with always an Abraham, as though, like the Children of Israel, they were awaiting the birth of the divinely commissioned to lift humanity one step higher in the understanding of itself, and make one ray clearer, what are the just and happy relations of men, the one with another.

"The color of the ground was in him, the red earth:
The tang and odor of the primal things—
The rectitude and patience of the rocks;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The justice of the rain that loves all leaves;
The pity of snow that hides all scars;

The loving kindness of the wayside well;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking weed
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky."

As an epoch of human history becomes remote, there is visible, to the eyes of those who see, the figure of some man who is recognized as its great embodiment. The golden age of Greece is summed up in Pericles. Julius Cæsar was the supreme expression of an age of power and law. The great Cromwell interpreted the English protest against every form of despotism. At this distance from the sixties, and that great, sad struggle, it is apparent that the colossal form rising above all others, is the weird figure of Abraham Lincoln.

The story of that boy as he grew to manhood is now a household legend, cherished in every American home: a chore boy at seventeen, six feet four in his stockings—when he had any; a rail splitter; a farm hand; a clerk in the country store of Denton-Offut & Company, at New Salem; so honest that when one day he took six cents over much from a cus-

tomer, he could not go to bed until that evening, after his day's work, he walked three miles into the country to pay back the money; a champion wrestler; a story teller, enchanting the village with his droll tales; a captain in the Black Hawk War; a member of the unlucky firm of Berry & Lincoln, the latter of whom sprawled on the store counter, or on the grass in the orchard, reading Blackstone, while his dissolute partner drank whiskey; a bankrupt, whose store had winked out and left him, so he said, with the national debt of eleven hundred dollars on his hands; a postmaster, carrying the mail around in his hat; a deputy surveyor, whose instruments were sold for debt; an almost desperate lover, grieving for Ann Rutledge; a candidate for the legislature, and not a very promising one either, in a mixed green coat, flax and tow linen pantaloons, a straw hat and pot metal boots, a wardrobe hardly up even to the Sangamon County standard. Fortunately the good people of his country knew that clothes do not make men, and they soon discovered that in intelligent capacity and in loftiness of purpose

he exceeded all the candidates. Of his experience as a legislator; of his triumphs during his twenty-five years' practice at the Illinois bar; of his famous speech at the Springfield convention, when, as he put it, willing to go down, linked to the truth in the advocacy of what was just and right, he said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall. But I do expect it will cease to be divided"; and of his nomination and election to the Presidency, I need not here speak in detail. It is enough to say that in all these, we find the same man, shrewd, sturdy, unconventional, sympathetic, always eager to play fair, with a keen sense of humor, but with the deep undertone of melancholy, which does not allow us to forget the mother buried in the forest clearing. As Mr. Pillsbury says: "How strange and startling are the dramatic shifts of scene and circumstance that attend the unfolding of this unique character. The forlorn backwoods boy turns out to be the appointed head of a

great nation, in a crisis affecting the fate of the world. The obscure country lawyer reveals in a phrase what a people is waiting to hear, and becomes in a day the prophet of a cause. The uncouth westerner from the prairies, unpracticed in arms, or in statescraft, outmasters the statesmen, outwits the diplomatists, gives the generals their plan of campaign. The unlettered man of the people speaks lofty eloquence soon to become classic. The raw politician, who never held public power for a day, takes the helm of state, when the ship is already on the rocks, when all the pilots and captains stand helpless and appalled, to bring her in safety and triumph through the storm. The awkward clown, reviled and lampooned over two continents, in four years is canonized by mankind. Without training, without external attractions, without worldly advantage, this child of poor frontier folk makes his way out of the wilderness to fix for all time the eyes of the world upon him, as a leader of the people, the liberator of the slave, the deliverer of his country, and in another turn of the kaleidoscope, to be numbered with the glorious

company of the martyrs and with Thy saints in glory everlasting."

When the Republican convention met in Chicago in 1860, the name of Abraham Lincoln was not much known beyond the narrow confines of his own state. He had gained certain prominence in his debates with Douglas, but he had been rejected by the state in his fight for the senatorship. Here again was a case where the stone which the builders rejected was destined in the Providence of God to become the head of the corner—and to a great majority of the men composing the Republican party, he was not thought to be a serious presidential possibility. The name which was most prominently before the Republicans was that of William H. Seward of New York. He was the recognized leader of the Republican party, and, speaking broadly, the country expected him to receive the nomination. That Seward expected to be nominated is beyond question. He had resigned from the United States Senate, and had gathered his friends around him, in his home at Auburn, and was awaiting the message which

should announce to him that he was the standard-bearer of the then new Republican party. The result of that convention we all know. The message announcing Seward's nomination did not come, but, instead, a message came bearing the startling intelligence that Abraham Lincoln, the country lawyer of Illinois, had been chosen. But even after Lincoln was nominated, a large percentage of the Republicans felt that the choice of the convention was an unwise one, and that, after all, Seward was the only man worthy of the full confidence of the party. They reasoned: "Seward is a tried and trusted statesman, his long and useful experience as Governor of New York, and as Senator from that State, have given ample executive and legislative experience," and, as they themselves said: "The nomination of Lincoln was the triumph of unobjectionable mediocrity over greatness, which had of necessity, during a long series of public services, raised up many enemies to itself."

"The result of the Chicago convention," wrote the committee to Seward, "has been more than a surprise to the Republicans of

New York. That you who have been the earliest defender of Republican principles—the acknowledged head and leader of the party, who have given directions to its movements and form and substance to its acts—that you should have been put aside upon the narrow ground of expediency, we can hardly realize or believe. Whatever the decision of this, or a hundred other conventions, we recognize in you the real leader of the Republican party; and the citizens of every State and of all creeds and parties, and the history of our country will confirm this judgment."

It is but just, however, to say that despite this feeling, Seward did not even for a moment forget his allegiance to the great principles of his party, and threw himself heart and soul into the campaign and worked with a vigor and eloquence which did much to accomplish the glorious results, and yet withal, the opinion of the great prime minister regarding Lincoln had not changed. He still considered him a weak and untried man, and his personal letters of this period revealed the startling fact that he (Seward) regarded himself as the only per-

son capable of preserving the Union, and his acceptance of the portfolio of State was in view of the necessity of some strong and able hand to guide the destinies of the incoming administration. Lincoln was deeply sensible of this criticism, and he felt the estimate in which he was held by the great men of his own party. There is a note of sadness in his tone as he leaves Springfield for Washington on the 11th day of February, 1861, which, in part at least, is to be accounted for by his knowledge of the mental attitude of his associates in the tremendous undertaking which was before him:

"My friends: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and to the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine

Being Who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him Who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

Washington had at least the confidence and respect of his associates in his great struggle, but this brave, lonely soul left his home in the simple village to assume responsibilities so tremendous and overwhelming, and yet without the full measure of the confidence and respect of those who were jointly interested with him in the notable endeavors—and how wondrously did he, step by step, overcome the prejudices of his fellows, until they were at least ready, all, to bow the knee, and proclaim him master. Passing over the attempt of Seward to revise the inaugural address by leaving out the clause: "to hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the government," and his bitter and forceful attempts to prevent "bread being sent to Anderson," which

was the President's expression for sending relief to Fort Sumpter—we come to one of the most remarkable events in our history, namely, a member of the official family of the President, demanding in a letter that the President surrender the management of the government to him. This, Mr. Seward did in a memorandum, entitled, "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." This letter is after all one of the most extraordinary pieces of effrontery ever uttered. This remarkable document asserts that the administration, after a month, is without a policy, foreign or domestic. In closing, after advising that explanations were to be demanded of England, Spain, France and Russia, and if some satisfactory answers were not received, then war should be declared, he says:

"Whatever policy we adopt, there must be energetic prosecution of it. For this purpose, it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it, incessantly. Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or devolve it upon some member of his cabinet. Once adopted, all debates on it must

end, and all agree and abide. It is not in my especial province; but I neither seek to evade or assume responsibility."

To this, the President replied that the domestic policy of the administration was to be found in the inaugural address, and that the foreign policy was contained in the circulars and instructions already issued to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy. Upon the closing proposal, that the responsibility must rest somewhere, and absolute authority be given some one, Mr. Lincoln said:

"I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason, or continue to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still upon points arising in its progress, I wish and suppose I am entitled to have the advice of all the cabinet."

Am I not right in saying that if Mr. Seward's "Thoughts for the President's Consideration," is a remarkable document, that Lin-

coln's reply is thrice remarkable? Has the world another parallel of such magnanimity? As Alonzo Rothschild says: "Having quietly settled the question of supremacy, Mr. Lincoln put the 'Thoughts' away among his personal papers, where they remained until his private secretaries, years after both statesmen had passed from the scene, published them to an astonished world. Excepting Mr. Nicolay, nobody else apparently knew of their existence, for the one to whom they were addressed never, it is believed, spoke of them, not even to the Secretary of State himself. If that gentleman, when he received his answer, had any lingering doubts as to the President's superiority over him, they must have been dismissed, when he realized how entirely Mr. Lincoln disdained to take advantage of a weapon, which in the grasp of most politicians would, under the circumstances, have been used to destroy the maker. If ever a public man held a formidable rival in the hollow of his hand, here was an instance of it. Yet Gulliver setting down unharmed the Liliputian who had tormented him, behaved not more gently than

did the President toward his presumptuous minister."

Thus ended Mr. Seward's dream of domination. Thus began the revision of his opinions. Thus began the common understanding, which grew day by day into a love, and finally a veneration and reverence until with old Adam, Seward was wont to cry out:

> "Master, go on, and I will follow thee
> To the last gasp with faith and loyalty."

With a grace peculiarly his own, Seward adapted himself to the new conditions, his every action thereafter seems to say:

> "Pardon, I beseech you
> Henceforward I am ever ruled by you."

How quickly sometimes conditions change. Not many months after the incidents referred to, a change had come over the general sentiments of the country, and many dissatisfied Republicans in New England sought to discredit Mr. Seward in the eyes of the President. In fact, in September, 1862, a committee called on Mr. Lincoln, representing not only the dissatisfied Republicans of New York, but five New England Governors also.

They practically demanded such a change of policy as could but result in the dismissal of Mr. Seward from the cabinet. The President, perceiving that their criticism was based upon personal feeling, dismissed them with this short and forceful sentence: "You gentlemen, to hang Mr. Seward, would destroy the government." Later in the same year at a caucus of Republican Senators, it was voted to demand that Seward be dismissed, but even with such powerful enemies, Lincoln's fidelity and love for his great Prime Minister did not falter; he defended him in season and out of season, and retained him as his friend and colleague unto the end.

Well might Emerson say: "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong." Well indeed might Longfellow, writing to his friend, say: "To understand the heart of the President, is to know the beauty of the Heart of the Son of Man."

Rising in the House of Commons, when the news of the death of Lincoln reached England, Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, said:

"Whatever the various or varying opinions, in this House, and in the country generally, on the policy of the late President of the United States, all must agree that in one of the severest trials that ever tested the moral qualities of man, he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength."

He mastered the great men about him, not because he was President. His mastery was of another kind; great enough to confess his own wrong, great enough to follow the advice of his associates; great enough also, in the last analysis, to remain firm when he was convicted of the righteousness and justice of his opinion, against any or all of his advisers and friends; great enough to overlook personal insults and repeated disrespect, if the cause of union and liberty were to be aided thereby. His relation not only with Secretary Seward, but also with Secretaries Chase and Stanton, exhibits enough of the magnanimous nature of this mountain-hearted man to give us a broad understanding of the stupendous fact, that the law of love was the dominating and all powerful trait in the character of Abraham Lin-

coln. Other men who have won distinction in the annals of our history, may lay claim to greatness by reason of their intellectual attainments; by reason of indomitable force of their characters; but Lincoln stands alone as the one man who, in the midst of strife and disaster, in the midst of treachery and treason, in the midst of backbiting and calumny, stood and wielded his influence, not by the force of his position, but by the compelling power of love, and I trust I may not be accused of any sacrilegious or irreverent remark, when I tell you that his character more nearly resembles the character of Him Who was the Saviour of mankind, than the character of any other man noted in the history of our country. It has been repeatedly said that Lincoln was only an echo; that the great men about him ruled and dominated him; that he was the creature of his cabinet. The controversy between Montgomery Blair and General Halleck is an instance of his matchless magnanimity.

Mr. Blair, as Postmaster General, had made some disparaging remarks concerning the army, and General Halleck resented these

remarks. His case was taken up by Secretaries Stanton and Chase, and they endeavored to secure Mr. Blair's removal from the cabinet. When the matter was brought to the attention of the President, and he was appealed to, to dismiss Mr. Blair from the cabinet, he prepared the following address, which he delivered to his ministers:

"I must myself be the judge how long to retain and when to remove any one of you from his position. It would greatly pain me to discover any of you endeavoring to procure another's removal, or in any way to prejudice him before the public. Such endeavor would be a wrong to me, and much worse, a wrong to the country. My wish is that on this subject no remark be made, or questions asked by any of you here or elsewhere, now or hereafter."

This address has somewhat the tone of a schoolmaster lecturing a class of unruly boys, and, to any candid mind, must put to rest forever the insinuation that he was anything but the master giving his explicit and imperative directions to his subordinates.

This little address should be read by all who are misled into the belief that Lincoln was not an authority in the administration that bears his name. And, moreover, there is, even in this address, forceful and powerful as it is, the gentle element of love which pervades everything that came from his majestic pen.

Lincoln did not approve of the disparaging remarks which were made by Mr. Blair, but he felt that they were not sufficient in themselves to make it necessary for him to inflict upon Mr. Blair the humiliation of being asked to leave the cabinet, and he was unwilling to injure the feelings of this very good and patriotic man, unless the question at issue was a vital one.

This same characteristic is most wonderfully shown in the letter which he writes to General Hooker. In giving General Hooker the command of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln had many misgivings, and he was particularly anxious that Hooker should understand that he had been guilty of gross unkindness to his superior officers, but despite the fact, the administration was willing to give to

him all the support that was possible to give a commanding officer. He writes:

"General, I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course, I have done this upon what appears to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you.

"I believe you are a brave and skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix in politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country, and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer.

"I have heard in such a way as to believe it, of you recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course, it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have

given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship.

"The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more or less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit that you have aided to infuse into the army of criticising their commanders, and withholding the facts from them, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it.

"And now, Hooker, beware of rashness! Beware of rashness! But with energy and sleepless vigilance, go forward and give us victories."

Can anyone read this letter without an overwhelming sense of the greatness of this man, Abraham Lincoln? Can anyone read this letter without having a glimpse at least of the great love which ruled and governed the life of Abraham Lincoln, and caused him to reach

out his strong hand to this impetuous, hasty, and wilful, fighting Joe Hooker, and say, "Hooker, my son, beware of the pitfalls that you yourself have dug, and in God's name go forward and give us victories, depending all the while upon my faithful assistance, even though your own folly may have caused the trouble"?

At this distance, it is difficult for us to understand that, prior to Lincoln's second election, there were grave doubts expressed by many of the country's most prominent men as to whether or not Lincoln could be renominated and re-elected. During the great popular depression which prevailed just before the Democratic party made its presidential nomination in 1864, and when the campaign of the Republicans lagged with indescribable languor, the military situation was dark and cloudy.

Lincoln began to share in the prevailing impression, that he would not be re-elected. Then his enemies circulated the absurd rumor that the President and his cabinet, being sure of defeat at the polls, would willingly help on

the ruin that they were not able to avert.

With these things in view, Mr. Lincoln, on the 23rd of August, wrote the following memorandum:

"This morning, and for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have to secure his election on such grounds that he can not possibly save it afterwards."

What can the carping critic say now of the politician Lincoln? Politician he truly was; but the primary difference between a politician and a statesman is the essential motive which moves them to action, and in the midst of a dark hour, when it seemed that his country was determined not to appreciate the effort which he was making to save and preserve the integrity of the Union, he puts aside his own ambition, an ambition worthy of the best American, and pledges to himself and Almighty God, that whatever he does must be done to the end of saving and preserving the

Union. And during his entire life, this spirit ruled and governed his every action.

And even in his triumphs, this spirit never for one moment deserted him. After he had been triumphantly re-elected to the Presidency, his enemies discomfited — the most powerful man in the United States—the whole world ringing his praise, he is called upon on two occasions to answer a serenade. On one occasion he says in response:

"I am thankful to God for this approval of the people, but while deeply grateful for this mark of their confidence in me, if I know my own heart, my gratitude is free from any taint of personal triumph. I do not impugn the motives of anyone opposed to me. It is no pleasure to me to triumph over anyone, but I give thanks to the Almighty for this evidence of the people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity."

Again, some days later, in answer to another serenade, he said:

"Alas! The rebellion continues. And now that the election is over, may not all have a common interest to reunite in a common effort

to save our common country? For my own part, I have striven, and shall strive to avoid placing any obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here, I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. While I am duly sensible to the high compliment of a re-election, and duly grateful, as I trust to Almighty God, for having directed my countrymen to a right conclusion, as I think, for their good, it adds nothing to my satisfaction that any other man may be disappointed by the result.

"May I ask those who have not differed with me, to join me in the same spirit toward those who have; and now let me close by asking three hearty cheers for our brave soldiers and seamen, and for their valiant and successful commanders."

If ever there was a time in the history of the life of Abraham Lincoln, when he might have been expected to hold in his magnanimous heart some resentment of feeling, some sense of personal triumph over his enemies, it was at this time; and yet, the whole burden of his speech, the whole burden of his words, the whole burden of his hopes, his aspirations,

was to the end that under God he might be the humble instrumentality in preserving the Union of these states.

The world's history has no parallel—a victorious champion reaching out his hands to the enemies who had slandered and reviled him, and saying to them, "Let us forget all personal hate and rancor, all personal bitterness and evil speaking. Nay, let us forget ourselves, and lose ourselves in the great endeavor to preserve our common country."

What other President can you name whose magnanimous spirit would have prompted him to write to his commanding general in the field, as Lincoln wrote to Grant:

"My Dear General: I do not remember that you and I have met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment of an almost inestimable service you have done the country. I write to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did, march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports and go below. * * * When you dropped below and took

Port Gibson, Grand Gulf and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northwest, east of the Big Black, I thought it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right, and I was wrong. Yours very truly, A. Lincoln."

I presume it is a fair and reasonable statement, that the world's history has no parallel for simplicity of action; the commander-in-chief of an army, willingly writing to his subordinates in the field, saying "This is to acknowledge that you were right, and I was wrong," typifying again, as it does, that the ever-favored object of the heart of Abraham Lincoln was the country, the nation, the union, the preservation of these, placed before his own personal feelings and considerations.

If I should attempt this morning to quote the almost innumerable letters of condolence and sympathy which this man found time to write to the bereaved and stricken families of the country, the evening sun would set before I had been fairly started. But I want you to

bear with me in one instance at least, in order that I may illustrate again this spirit of gentle kindliness which pervaded his every action:

"Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass. Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from a grief of a loss so overwhelming, but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of your country.

"Yours very sincerely and respectfully, Abraham Lincoln."

Ah, what might have been accomplished by the man whose heart could dictate so matchless a letter of human sympathy as this,

had he been spared us in the days of reconstruction!

Sublime was the personality of the man whose every action was one of gentleness, and whose very heart beat responsive to the sighs and to the sorrows of all mankind. This spirit was even comprehended by the great leaders of the Southern Confederacy, for it was Jefferson Davis who said:

"Next to the destruction of the Confederacy, the death of Abraham Lincoln was the darkest day the South has ever known, and as I grow older, I am not sure but that the death of Lincoln was a greater calamity even than the surrender of Lee's army."

As I said before, I now repeat—What might have been accomplished had he been spared to us to mould and fashion the sentiment which was to rule and govern the nation in the reconstruction period? The dark and terrible days through which this nation passed during the reconstruction period, I believe would have been very different had Lincoln been spared to us.

The great, magnanimous heart of that

matchless leader of men was big enough and commanding enough in its strength and power to have moulded the disintegrated and scattered elements of the Southern Confederacy into a compact and perfect whole, and the story of the prodigal son might again have been repeated, and the father might have cried out to his children: "Come, you have deserted my parental roof; you have rebelled against my paternal authority; you have risen up in insurrection and rebellion; you have spent your substance in riotous living; you have caused the blood of your brothers, my children, to flow like water; you have cost us billions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of precious lives; but with it all, I cannot forget that you are my children; and while you are even yet a great way off from the spirit of submissive obedience, nevertheless I will gather up my remaining strength and I will go out in the highways and meet you, and say, 'Come again unto your father's house, to a table that is spread for you, and there shall be great rejoicing, not because of the triumph of our arms, not because we have succeeded by force

and power in crushing out this rebellion, but because I recognize in you my offspring and my child.' "

I cannot better express myself than in the immortal words of Dr. Storrs, when he says:

"When he took the reins of Government, the finances of the country seemed hopelessly deranged, and after many years of peace, it was difficult to raise money at unprecedented interest, for its daily use; and when he died, after such expenditures as no man dreamed of, through four long years of devastating war, the credit of the Republic was so firmly established that foreign markets were clamorous for its bonds.

"When he came to Washington, the Navy, at the command of the Government, was scattered almost beyond recall, to the ends of the earth, and was even ludricrously insufficient for instant needs. He left it framed in iron, instead of oak, with wholly new principles expressed in its structures, and large enough to bind the continent in blockade; while it made the national flag familiar on every sea with commerce courses.

"He found an army remotely dispersed, almost hopelessly disorganized by the treachery of its officers, with hardly enough of it left to furnish a bodyguard for his march to the national capitol. He left half a million men in arms, after the losses of fifty campaigns, with valor, discipline, arms and generalship unsurpassed in the history of the world.

"He found our diplomacy a byword and a hissing in most of the foreign courts. He made it intelligent, influential, respected, wherever a civilized language is spoken.

"In his moral and political achievements at home he was still more successful. He found the arts of industry prostrated, nay, almost paralyzed, by the arrest of commerce, the repudiation of debts, the universal distrust. He left them so trained, quickened and developed, that henceforth they are secure amid the world's competition.

"He came to Washington through a people, morally rent and disorganized, of whom it was known that a part at least were in full accord with disloyal plans. He laid heavy taxes; he drafted them into armies; he made no effort

to excite their admiration; he seemed to throw down even the ancient monument of their personal liberty.

"He went back to his grave through the very same people, so knit into one, by their love for each other, and their reverence for him, that the cracking of the continent could hardly part them.

"At his entrance on his office, he found the leaders of the largest, fiercest and most confident rebellion known in history, apparently in all things superior to himself in capacity, in culture, in political experience, in control over men, in general weight with the country itself.

"And, when he was assassinated, he left them so utterly overthrown and discomfited that they fled over sea; a power it had taken thirty years to mature—a power that put everything in the contest, money, men, harbors, homes, churches, cities, states themselves, and that fought with a fury never surpassed in the world's history, he not only crushed but extinguished in four years.

"He found a race immeshed in bondage

which had lasted already two hundred years, and had been compacted and confirmed by invention and commerce, by arts, legislation, by social usage, and even by religion; he pretended no special fondness for the race; he refused to make war on its behalf; but he took it up cheerfully in the sweep of his plans, and left it a race of free workers and soldiers.

"He came to the capitol of an empire, severed by what seemed to the world, eternal lines, with sectional interest and irremovable hatreds, forbidding reconstruction; he left it the capitol of an empire, so restored that the thought of its division was henceforth an absurdity; with its untiy more complete than that of Great Britain; with its ancient flag and unchanging rule supreme again from sea to sea, and from Gulf to Great Lakes.

"Nay, he found a nation who had lost in a measure its primitive faith in the grand ideas of its own constitution; and he left that nation so instructed and renewed, so aware of its supremacy of principles over force, so connected to the justice and the liberty which its founders had valued, that the era of his power

was the era of its new birth; that our history will be nobler and more luminous forever for his inspiration.

"Public achievement is not his only memorial. His influence has come 'like the clear shining after rain,' on the personal character of the people he ruled. He educated a nation into a gentleness more strange than its skill, and more glorious than its valor.

"Through his personal spirit he restrained and exalted the temper of a continent—and our letters are nobler, our art more spiritual, our philanthropy more generous, our very churches more honest and free, because of what we learned of him. The public estimate of honesty is higher, the sense of the power and grandeur of character is more intimate in men's minds,—we know what style of manhood America needs, and in her progress, tends to produce. He has given us a fresh and deeper sense of that eternal Providence, which was his daily bulwark.

"Not to our country alone has his work been confined—across the sea extends his mighty influence. It verberates this hour

around the great world, and despotic institutions are less secure and absolute; the progress of liberty throughout the great world is more rapid and sure by reason of what he wrought. The nations of the world are nearer unto God because he lived; the human race itself has been lifted heavenward toward the gates of mingled gold and pearl that wait to swing on silent hinges into the age of freedom and universal peace."

"I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, farseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

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